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HOME, AUTO LOANS TO BE MORE EXPENSIVE

As projected by most experts, RBI on Wednesday increased the repo rate, the rate at which the central bank lends money to banks, by 25 bps

The move will make loans – including housing and auto – and corporate credit expensive

This is the sixth straight increase in interest rates since May last year, and the cumulative hike now totals 250 bps

After the latest hike, the benchmark repurchase or repo rate stands at **6.5%**

The regulator has kept the door open for more hikes as core inflation remains high | P12

"The stickiness of core or underlying inflation is a matter of concern. We need to see a decisive moderation in inflation. We have to remain unwavering in our commitment to bring down CPI headline inflation" –Shaktikanta Das, RBI governor

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Quake toll tops 11,700; one from B'luru missing

YESHI SELI @ New Delhi

AN Indian employee of a company in Bengaluru, who was on a business trip to Turkiye, has been missing ever since a predawn earthquake struck the country and neighbouring Syria on Monday and left over 11,700 people dead.

"One Indian who was on a business trip to Turkiye is missing. We hope to get some information on him. There were 3,000 Indians in Turkiye and all of them are safe. Around 10 are stuck in different parts of the country due to break down of services but they are all in a safe zone. Our mission in Ankara has set up a help desk. Until now, around 75 people have reached out for information," said Sanjay Verma, Secretary (West) at the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA).

In all, 65 nations have sent teams for relief and rescue in Turkiye. The MEA has deployed two Turkish speaking officers and four other personnel who are working with Turkish authorities. Around 250 Indians are on the ground helping in relief, which includes women. Besides, 130 tonnes of relief supplies have already been sent to Turkiye.

As for Syria, one relief aircraft has been sent there. Sanctions don't apply during disasters, so India has sent relief to Damascus. "We follow the G20 mantra of one earth, one family. This is no time for geo strategies. If Syria is in crisis we will help, sanctions don't cover such challenges," Verma added. P19

HONOURING THE WINNERS

(From top L) Ramya S Moorthy, founder, Nimaya Robotics; Joshna Chinappa, squash player; Prabhu Chawla, Editorial Director, TNIE; Vijayalakshmi Nachiar, co-founder, Ethicus; Priyadarshini Govind, Bharathanatyam dancer; (second row) Vishakha Hari, Harikatha exponent; Nanditha Krishna, historian; Vidya Subramanian, vocalist; Dr P Poorna Chandrika, former director, Institute of Mental Health; Anuradha Krishnamoorthy & Namrata Sundaresan, founders, Kase; Kalpana and Mano; Kumar Sonthalia, Chairman & Managing Director, TNIE group; (front row) Lakshmi Menon, CEO, TNIE; Radhika Santhanakrishnan of Sri Dhanvantri Trust; Kiran Bedi, former Puducherry L-G; Dr Gagandeep Kang, physician-scientist, Santwana Bhattacharya, Editor, TNIE, at the Devi Awards in Chennai on Wednesday | R SATISH BABU | REPORT: P8

NATION'S BIGGEST EDU CONCLAVE STARTS TODAY

MRITTIKA BANERJEE @ Chennai

THE 12th edition of ThinkEdu, a two-day conclave on education, is poised to bring together some of India's most notable figures for a feast of insightful content. With over 40 distinguished speakers, the event will have the who's who of the country's leading minds, including Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, former Chief Justice of India UU Lalit, Jawaharlal Nehru University Vice-Chancellor Santishree Pandit and economist Subramanian Swamy. Attendees will also hear from former Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, Tamil Nadu Finance Minister P Thiaga Rajan, and Rajasthan MLA Sachin Pilot, among others. The star-studded event spanning 30 sessions and 18 hours of content will also feature corporate leaders such as Kris Gopalakrishnan, NS Parthasarathy and Ramya S Moorthy, filmmaker Vivek Agnihotri, and Tamil cinema superstar Vijay Sethupathi.

The dynamic conclave, ThinkEdu 2023, taking place on February 9 and 10 at the ITC Grand Chola in Chennai, will delve into the theme of The New India: Rising for the World and promises to ignite fresh ideas and debates about the future of education in India. CONTINUED ON: P7

THINKEDU CONCLAVE

Feb 9, 10 at Grand Chola

The conclave to be held on Feb 9 and 10 at the ITC Grand Chola in Chennai will bring together notable figures from business, politics and entertainment to debate the future of India's education

2004-2014 a lost decade: PM Modi

Says the UPA era was mired in corruption and scandals, deflects Rahul's questions on Adani

PREETHA NAIR @ New Delhi

A day after Congress leader Rahul Gandhi raised questions on the links between industrialist Gautam Adani and Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the PM lit into the Congress, calling the UPA era 'a lost decade' mired in corruption and missed opportunities.

Now a decisive government led by the BJP has brought political stability to the country, Modi said in his reply to the debate on the Motion of Thanks to the President's address in the Lok Sabha on Wednesday.

In his two-hour speech, the PM lashed out at the Congress-led UPA government from 2004-2014 for the monumental mistakes it made. "Congress turned every opportunity into a crisis. From 2004-2014, it's a lost decade for India but 2022 is India's decade," he said.

Calling out the UPA regime's failures, he said: "When there was a boom in technology, they were caught up in the 2G scam. When the nuclear deal was underway, they were caught in a cash-for-votes scandal. Terrorist attacks happened during the UPA rule. India's voice was weak at the global level at that point in time."

Without making any references to the charges made by Rahul on his proximity to Adani, Modi invoked his connection with people. "Some people work for a family, but Modi works for the nation. Trust in Modi was not built through newspaper headlines or TV. I have given my life for the people of the country," he said.

Taking a swipe at the Opposition, Modi said central law enforcement agencies have brought them together. "I thought poll results would bring them together, but it didn't happen. They should thank the ED that it has brought them together," he said.

In his fierce counter to Rahul, who suggested that the Harvard University should conduct a study on the link between politics and business houses, the PM said it is ironic as Harvard has already done a study on the Congress decline.

Parts of Rahul's speech expunged

Certain comments from Rahul Gandhi's speech in Parliament on Tuesday have been expunged because the allegations were not substantiated with proof | P9

BALLARI HORROR

Stray dogs attack 20 people, four admitted to ICU

KIRAN BALANNANAVAR @ Ballari

BARELY two months after two children were fatally bitten by a rabies-infected dog in Ballari, a pack of stray dogs went on the rampage and attacked 20 people at three different locations in the city. Four of the victims have been admitted to the ICU ward in Vijayanagara Institute of Medical Science (VIMS). Among the 20 victims, seven are children.

According to local residents, the dogs had symptoms of rabies, but corporation officials have denied it.

Manujath Nayak, who was bitten by a dog, said three dogs, including one which had rabies symptoms, attacked the people all of a sudden. "The incident was reported in ward number 30 in Vattappagere area," he said. "Recently, one rabies-infected dog was found roaming in our area. We alerted city municipal corporation officials, but they did not pay heed. Now, we are suffering due to inaction by authorities," he added.

Nikita, founder of Humane World for Animal, Ballari, said stray dog bite cases have become common in Ballari city. P7

EXPRESS INTAKE

CM: Cabinet decided to name S'mogga airport after BSY | P6

Biffes-2023 in March will host screening of 300 movies | P7

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